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Chairperson: Mrs. Gittens-Joseph ..... (Trinidad andTobago)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 103: Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*) (A/C.3/55/L.2)

Draft resolution A/C.3/55/L.2 on the International Year of Volunteers

1. **The Chairperson** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

2. *Draft resolution A/C.3/55/L.2 was adopted.*

Agenda item 104: Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons (*continued*) (A/55/167; A/C.3/55/L.6)

3. **The Chairperson** suggested that the Committee should recommend to the General Assembly that it take note of the report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons (A/55/167).

4. *It was so decided.*

Draft resolution A/C.3/55/L.6 on follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons

5. **The Chairperson** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

6. **Mr. Fernandez** (Spain) said that Algeria, Argentina, Cape Verde, the Czech Republic, Guatemala, Iceland, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Macedonia, Malta, Morocco, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Poland and Ukraine had also become sponsors of the draft resolution.

7. **The Chairperson** announced that Armenia, Belarus, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Congo, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Madagascar and Uganda also wished to sponsor the draft resolution.

8. *Draft resolution A/C.3/55/L.6 was adopted.*

Agenda item 105: Crime prevention and criminal justice (*continued*) (A/C.3/55/L.7*)

Draft resolution on the United Nations Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (A/C.3/55/L.7)*

9. **Mr. Manyokole** (Lesotho), speaking on behalf of the African Group of States, introduced draft resolution A/C.3/55/L.7*. The new paragraph 2 recognized the Secretary-General's efforts to mobilize the financial resources needed to reinstate three frozen posts at the Institute. African Member States looked forward to continued cooperation with the United Nations on the issue.

10. *Draft resolution A/C.3/55/L.7* was adopted.*

Agenda item 107: Advancement of women (*continued*) (A/55/3, A/55/38, A/55/138-S/2000/693, A/55/162-S/2000/715 and A/55/271, 293, 308, 322, 385 and 399; A/C.3/55/3 and 4)

Agenda item 108: Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" (*continued*) (A/55/74, A/55/162-S/2000/715 and A/55/341; A/C.3/55/4)

11. **Ms. Šimonović** (Croatia) said that significant achievements of recent months should not become a cause for complacency. The full participation of women in decision-making — which had yet to be achieved — must remain the key area of concern, since it was a prerequisite for implementation of all other critical areas of concern under the Beijing Platform for Action and the Beijing+5 outcome document. The Human Rights Committee had sought to further the integration of a gender perspective in its dialogue with States Parties by adopting General Comment No. 28 on the equality of rights between men and women. Other human rights treaty monitoring bodies should follow its example.

12. At the national level, a conference on women held the previous week had concluded that although some progress on gender issues had been achieved (such as an increase in the representation of women in parliament), much remained to be done. Governmental and non-governmental participants alike had shared the

view that the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome document should serve as guidelines for the new national policy on gender equality, and that the latter should incorporate time-bound targets and realistic goals. A committee had been established to monitor follow-up in national legislation and legal practice and to elaborate further measures for eliminating gender discrimination in Croatia.

13. **Ms. Raivoso** (Mozambique) said that her delegation wished to associate itself with the views expressed by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

14. In order to tackle negative impacts of globalization on the advancement of women and to implement Beijing goals at the regional, national and international levels, her Government had adopted political, social and economic frameworks. It had opted to concentrate on certain priority areas in the Beijing Platform for Action which were crucial to the advancement of women. In order to combat the feminization of poverty, a framework had been adopted according special status to women — particularly rural and disabled women — and stipulating their equal access to employment, land and credit. Women's involvement in sustainable agricultural development was being actively promoted. Her Government had succeeded in increasing the access of women and girls to education from 63 to 82 per cent over the past five years. Women's health in all its aspects was being viewed as a further priority, and a national committee had been established to coordinate national policy on HIV/AIDS.

15. The Government was, moreover, committed to reviewing national legislation relating to women's rights and gender-related violence and had made efforts to raise public awareness of the issue in consultation with civil society. Furthermore, a Ministry of Women and Coordination of Social Action had been established to supplement existing institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women. The participation of women in leadership and decision-making in the political, social and economic spheres was also being encouraged: since 1995, the number of women in parliament had increased from 65 to 74 out of a total of 250 parliamentarians. Her Government looked forward to receiving support from the United Nations system — including the Bretton Woods institutions — to assist in further implementing Beijing goals.

16. **Ms. Htay** (Myanmar) said that considerable progress had been achieved over the years in improving the status of women around the world. The affirmation by world leaders at the Millennium Summit of equal rights and opportunities for women and men was a further welcome development, although there was no room for complacency. At the national level, her Government had stepped up its efforts in recent years to promote and protect the rights of women. Equality with men was bestowed on Myanmar women as an inherent right. Indeed, there was no discrimination against women in Myanmar. Their equal rights in the political, economic, administrative and social spheres were guaranteed by law. The Government had also established machinery for the advancement of women at the local, municipal and national levels.

17. Moreover, a national plan for the advancement of women was being developed, with particular attention accorded to women in remote border areas. Women and girls were protected by law as well as tradition. The Government had taken measures to prevent sexual exploitation and cross-border trafficking in Myanmar women and children, inter alia by establishing cross-border machinery and by promoting vocational training in income-generating activities for women and girls. Fully cognizant of their important role in society, the Government was implementing and monitoring programmes for promoting the survival, protection and development of women and children. Furthermore, it was determined to support international efforts to promote gender equality and the advancement of women.

18. **Mr. Ayudhaya** (Thailand) said that women were a major force for development, and women's issues were integral to the global agenda. The promotion of human rights had to be considered from the perspective of both sexes. All Member States and all international organizations involved must stand together to give effect to the commitments made at the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, carrying forward those of the Fourth World Conference on Women. The interests of women had to be borne constantly in mind in order to achieve for them parity in education, a non-discriminatory legal climate and appropriate health care and to combat the exploitation and mistreatment of women. National and international means to further their advancement must be devised,

including important legal tools like the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

19. Thailand's Constitution guaranteed equality before the law and equality of rights without any discrimination whatsoever, thus safeguarding the equality of women. His Government considered the advancement of women to be part of the country's development and thus had included a plan for the advancement of women in its national social and economic development plan, which gave priority to reducing poverty among women, developing their economic and management potential, expanding their employment opportunities and generally improving the quality of their lives. Skills training was being provided in income-generating cooperatives for women and girls. Women were beginning to hold high positions in the private and public sectors at an increasing pace.

20. Member States had to join forces to combat the serious violation of human rights represented by trafficking in women, a complex problem involving many different countries of origin, transit and destination, and often bound up with international organized crime, economic exploitation, prostitution and the employment of illegal aliens.

21. **Ms. Kim Hyo-eun** (Republic of Korea) said that the persistence of certain traditional beliefs and practices represented the greatest obstacle to the implementation by Governments of the Beijing Platform for Action. While the significance of national and regional particularities must not be underestimated, such beliefs should not become grounds for the violation of women's rights. It was primarily incumbent upon States to promote change in the mindset of their people, particularly when traditional beliefs led to gender-related violence. No forms of violence against women could be tolerated. Given, also, that HIV/AIDS had reached alarming proportions among women and that girls between the ages of 15 and 19 had been revealed to be most vulnerable to infection, it was fitting that a special session of the General Assembly should be devoted to the issue. With regard to trafficking in women and children, the entry into force and timely adoption of the relevant additional protocols represented an important step forward. However, international instruments alone would not suffice: political will was required to ensure their full implementation. The Republic of Korea was in the process of reforming its presidential commission on women's affairs to create a Ministry of Women, which would be accorded the necessary resources to ensure that it dealt more comprehensively with the task at hand.

22. **Mr. Al-Suwaidi** (Bahrain) said that women's issues were a top development priority in his country, where the Constitution guaranteed the equality of all citizens. Every endeavour was therefore being made to provide equality of opportunity, especially with regard to education, training and health, and to pursue a policy of openness, while upholding the cultural, religious and moral values of the society. It was recognized at the very highest level that women must participate fully in public life and the decision-making process, and they were therefore being given every encouragement to become effectively involved in society. His Government had taken a number of measures to ensure such participation, including the formulation of policies and projects designed to promote the involvement of women in all aspects of social and economic life and development.

23. Non-governmental organizations played an important part in promoting women's rights. Such organizations included five women's groups, which were coordinating implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

24. Since 1975, Bahrain had participated in all international women's conferences and had made every effort to ensure that the resolutions and recommendations of such conferences were implemented by appropriate institutions. In 1997, a ministerial decision had provided for a mechanism for the coordination of relevant endeavours at the national level.

25. The Gulf region was undergoing rapid change in many ways. In order to remedy the shortfall in data, a specialized centre for studies relating to women and children had been established. It was envisaged that it would become an important resource centre on women and economic, social and cultural issues for the whole Arab world.

26. The situation of the Palestinian women living under occupation contrasted sharply with the current interest in involving Arab women effectively in the building of society. If Palestinian women were to make an effective contribution to their society, it was incumbent upon the international community to

consider how the Israeli occupation affected the promotion of women.

27. **Mr. Shobokshi** (Saudi Arabia) said that his delegation supported the statement made by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and joined its voice to those of earlier speakers who had urged the necessity of promoting women.

28. While every society had its own characteristics, certain values, such as the right to justice and equality, were universal. Islam, the basis of Saudi society, had accorded women all rights, in addition to their heavy responsibilities towards the family. His country had undertaken extensive development plans in order to enable women to participate in all aspects of life on a basis of equality with men. Special priority was given to women's education: 90 per cent of all women were educated, the same ratio as men. Education accounted for one quarter of the State budget, or 9 per cent of gross domestic product. Women had access to appropriate employment opportunities with full benefits in all State sectors, and every effort was being made to increase such opportunities.

29. Saudi women had full and equal rights with men in regard to ownership of property and commercial transactions and had access to interest-free long-term loans. Urban and rural women and girl children were provided with excellent health facilities and social security benefits as part of the State social development plan. In earnest of its sincerity in promoting women's rights, Saudi Arabia had become a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

30. While much progress had been made, women continued to be the object of discrimination. Palestinian and Syrian women in the occupied Arab territories were suffering greatly as a result of the Israeli occupation of their lands. Such occupation was in contravention of all norms and values and every international convention, including the fourth Geneva Convention. Those women were denied the opportunity to make the progress achieved by women in other societies or to enjoy their rights and a life of dignity. He therefore urged the occupying Power to honour its obligations under the fourth Geneva Convention. He agreed with previous speakers who had stated that the international community must shoulder its responsibilities and find a just and comprehensive solution to the problems of the region, based on the relevant resolutions of international legitimacy and the principle of land for peace.

31. **Mr. Sangare** (Mali) said that, after becoming a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1985, Mali had succeeded in integrating a gender approach into the mores of its society, with both men and women as actors in the achievement of gender equality and equal opportunities.

32. Mali's 1996-2000 national plan of action, drawing on the Beijing Platform for Action and other valuable recommendations for the advancement of women, gave priority to six areas: education, health, the rights of women, the participation of women in public life, their participation in economic development and environmental protection, and institutional strengthening. It made provision for activities such as information and consciousness-raising, training, studies, the construction and repair of infrastructures, institutional and financial support for departments dealing with the advancement of women and for women's associations, the full establishment of the Ministry for the Advancement of Women, and the publicizing of texts on the status of women.

33. A mid-point review had shown a rise in the school enrolment of girls and of literacy among women, broader health coverage for women, a number of economic benefits to women in fields of financial assistance, land and property ownership and inheritance, and considerable progress in the number of government posts held by women. Violence against women was a criminal offence in Mali; women currently enjoyed equal employment opportunities and equal pay; and the long-entrenched custom of genital mutilation had been virtually abandoned.

34. In order to do away with the remaining inequalities, Mali's 2000-2004 strategic plan was designed to ensure that women benefited from economic advancement and better health care, and improved access to vocational training, scientific and technical education, adult education and the media and the new communications technologies. It enhanced the legal status of women by promoting their rights and doing away with discriminatory laws and practices. It expanded their participation in public life and decision-making and fostered a gender perspective and a proper image of women in the media. Private foundations,

non-governmental organizations and civil society were all doing meaningful work to reinforce the Government's action.

35. The feminization of poverty, illiteracy and traditional norms and stereotypes exacerbated the new and old forms of inequality in developing countries throughout the world. Women suffered the most from globalization, structural adjustment programmes, discriminatory international trade and decreasing official development assistance. It was therefore essential to strengthen the United Nations organizations dealing with women's problems and, in that connection, the premature closure of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) was inconceivable. The status of women to a large extent determined that of children and of the family. To ensure the advancement of women, especially in the developing countries, the priority had to be given to education.

36. **Mr. Carranza** (Guatemala) said that his Government had developed policies for the advancement of women in collaboration with the National Women's Department and the National Women's Forum. Its policy was based on respect for human rights, including the sexual and reproductive rights of women, and sought greater financial support for the government offices that promoted the human rights of women. During the Millennium Summit, the President of Guatemala had signed the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which would give the women of Guatemala another tool for defending their rights in all areas. Moreover, under the Peace Agreements, his Government, in conjunction with non-governmental organizations and various United Nations agencies, was supporting projects for women and had set up an agency of its own to seek gender equality by applying a gender approach in United Nations programmes and projects in the country and develop technical cooperation to strengthen consultation between the Government and civil society.

37. During the recent twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, various Latin American delegations had adopted a coordinated approach as an expression of the regional commitment to the advancement of women. Regional agreements had provided the framework for Guatemala's national action and had made it possible for it to take a common position at the special session with the other countries of the region that also accurately reflected the situation in Guatemala. That regional commitment had brought the countries concerned closer together.

38. **Ms. Ikouebe** (Congo) welcomed the international community's reaffirmation of its commitment to the cause of women during both the Millennium Summit and the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and the entry into force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

39. The economic situation in the Congo had deeply affected the lives of women and made their poverty more acute. Despite the difficult circumstances, the Government had made it an objective in the agricultural sector and the informal sector where 64 per cent of workers were women to increase the production and income of women, improve their socio-economic situation and help them to organize and manage their activities.

40. There was a link between poverty, education and health. Education up to the age of 16 was compulsory in his country, and girls had equal access to education, although their drop-out rate increased in the higher grades, especially in scientific studies. The Government was currently seeking to facilitate the access of girls and women to technical and vocational education, reduce illiteracy among women and help handicapped girls and children in difficult circumstances rejoin society.

41. The Government was concerned at the alarming spread of HIV/AIDS, which was causing as many deaths as did malaria and was striking the most productive sectors of society, thus acting as a veritable brake on development. In the fight against the pandemic, it had stepped up its awareness campaigns, using information, education and communication to protect the most vulnerable, especially women of child-bearing age, and had set up an ambulatory treatment centre providing low-cost care. The Congo was also contributing to the Joint United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and had endorsed the convening of a special session of the General Assembly on the subject in 2001. It counted on the international community for assistance in finding an appropriate therapy for the disease.

42. The traditional belief in the inferiority of women had marginalized them and exposed them to violence;

and women's ignorance of their rights had compounded the problem. The government department responsible for women's issues had made combating violence against women a national priority. Information and consciousness-raising campaigns had been organized and medical and psychological care provided for the victims of sexual violence, with the assistance of non-governmental organizations. The Government was seeking to promote a culture of tolerance, peace and human rights and was helping to protect women living in the areas of armed conflict. Women themselves had done much to build and maintain peace through arms collection, mediation, advocacy and the like.

43. **Mr. Akopian** (Armenia) stressed that gender equality was possible only in a democratic culture, where women were not viewed as a minority or a separate group. The importance of democracy had been reaffirmed at the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century". Women's rights were subject to new challenges in the age of globalization. Accordingly, nations must strive to create an open and tolerant society in which traditional stereotypes would not hamper the enjoyment of those rights. Aware that women were often helpless in the face of HIV/AIDS, his Government accorded top priority to that issue and had allocated substantial resources for scientific research.

44. The transition to a market economy had had an adverse impact on women in the Central and Eastern European countries. Their representation in high-level government posts had declined sharply and they accounted for a disproportionate number of the unemployed. Armenian women were extremely vulnerable to the impact of economic hardship, conflicts and natural disasters. Accordingly, his Government had launched a number of assistance programmes for women, particularly refugees and women in the earthquake area. It was grateful for bilateral assistance and support from the United Nations Development Programme and other United Nations specialized agencies to supplement its resources for that purpose and looked forward to continuing its cooperation with the United Nations on women-related issues. Although Armenian legislation and society were not discriminatory, women's presence in government decision-making structures had been diminishing in a period of economic transition, political conflict, blockades and natural disasters which had created a "defence mentality" that favoured the assumption of responsibility by men.

45. The Armenian National Plan of Action for the Improvement of Women's Status and the Empowerment of Their Role in Society had been adopted in April 1998 and was accompanied by local plans of action. Activities under the Plan of Action were being coordinated by the Ministry of Social Security, supported by an inter-ministerial commission. Basic principles of the Plan included: increased participation of women in decision-making; assistance to female victims of violence; development of a social network for teenage girls; elaboration of proposals for the elimination of female unemployment; and the creation of better working conditions for women. An Advisory Committee on the Development of the Gender Policy had also been created. His Government attached particular importance to close cooperation between governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations. Indeed, 13 non-governmental organizations were represented on the Advisory Committee and four were represented on government subcommittees. More than 30 new non-governmental organizations dealing with women's issues had been registered in Armenia since the Beijing Conference; many of them openly cooperated with opposition parties and criticized official gender policies.

46. **Mr. Ingólfsson** (Iceland) said that his Government had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and signed its Optional Protocol and encouraged all countries which had not yet done so to ratify the Convention and bring their legislation into compliance with it. As noted in the final outcome document of the special session of the General Assembly on women, women and girls in many parts of the world continued to forgo their full human rights because of such factors as race, ethnicity, culture and religion, a situation which should be kept in mind during the Committee's later discussions on those subjects.

47. The human rights of women and equality between the sexes were not "women's issues": they concerned men and women alike and were essential for creating prosperous and progressive societies. With increased participation of women in the labour market, mothers and fathers should be offered equal opportunities to be active both within the family and outside it, and

Iceland had passed legislation granting both parents equal rights to parental leave.

48. His delegation welcomed the decision by the Security Council to discuss the subject of women, peace and security on United Nations Day later in the month, thus giving it the weight it deserved and helping to translate into reality the objectives set out in the final outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. Unfortunately, in many parts of the world, systematic discrimination against women was rarely challenged. The universal objective should instead be to reverse the situation so that discrimination against women never went unchallenged.

49. **Mr. Tekin** (Turkey) said that his Government was continuing to take measures to further improve the status and rights of women and to strengthen its international commitments in that area. It had withdrawn its reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and signed the Optional Protocol. It was also working on a series of measures in order to eliminate any legislation that might preclude full gender equality. The country's secular system was both the guarantee and the driving force behind the continuous improvement in the status and rights of women in Turkey.

50. Mainstreaming gender equality into all government policies and programmes had become a priority of the development agenda, and public sensitivity to gender equality had been significantly enhanced through the efforts of both the Government and non-governmental organizations. With regard to the latter, the Government recognized that civil society was an important source of support and legitimacy and was strengthening its collaboration with such organizations through regular consultations, by engaging them in the implementation of international technical cooperation programmes and by including them in official delegations at international meetings such as the special session on women.

51. **Mr. Padilla** (Dominican Republic) said that his delegation recognized the great importance of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), established pursuant to a recommendation of the World Conference of the International Women's Year, held in Mexico City in 1975. According to the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "An evaluation of the United Nations International Research and Training Institute", submitted to the Economic and Social Council in 1999, INSTRAW had achieved remarkable success and stood as an example to the whole United Nations system of what could be accomplished with minimal resources. It was therefore regrettable that the Institute was now mired in an acute financial crisis which might force it to close down unless it received substantial contributions from Member States, together with the assurance of sustained multi-year contributions.

52. It was difficult to accept the Secretary-General's argument because other small institutions of the United Nations system, such as the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), had overcome similar crises in the past, while some entities financed by voluntary contributions, such as the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), were entitled to a subsidy under the regular budget. He recalled that the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean had had to suspend its operations in June 1996 for lack of sufficient voluntary contributions to finance its activities but had then been revitalized in 1998 under a new Director who had done vigorous fund-raising. Furthermore, General Assembly resolution 54/55 E entitled "United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament" appealed to Member States to make voluntary contributions to the regional centres and made an unprecedented request to the Secretary-General to provide them all necessary support, within existing resources. He wondered why similar action could not be taken for INSTRAW, which had been on the verge of closing down in 1999 but had rallied following the establishment of a new working method and structure through the establishment of the electronic Gender Awareness Information and Networking System (GAINS). The independent mandate of INSTRAW had also been reaffirmed by the Beijing Platform for Action.

53. The real question was whether the international community was willing to save INSTRAW, the only entity in the United Nations system completely devoted to research, training and information within the context of the advancement of women and one of the only three United Nations institutions with its headquarters in the developing world. The INSTRAW crisis was not due to

lack of outputs but rather to financial strangulation, a situation which could be easily remedied through political will.

54. **Ms. Caesar** (Liberia) said that Liberia, as a post-war country, considered agenda items 107 and 108 to be critical to the rehabilitation and reconstruction process and expressed satisfaction with Member States' renewed commitment to implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Issues such as HIV/AIDS, gender mainstreaming, reproductive rights and women's full participation in decision-making continued to claim the attention of Member States but it was disheartening that structures established to deal with those issues continued to face challenges. Inadequate support for INSTRAW was a source of concern, in particular to developing countries which required support to promote gender mainstreaming. Post-war countries such as Liberia had not been able to take full advantage of the resources of INSTRAW, and she stressed the need for capacity-building and training in all areas of gender and development and called for increased support for INSTRAW so that it could carry out its mandate effectively.

55. Poverty eradication was of paramount importance for the stability of Liberia, and she noted that the civil crises had exacerbated problems such as illiteracy, unemployment, poor health and sanitation and environmental problems as well as the unjust social conditions of women. Debt relief for the heavily indebted poor countries was therefore essential for the success of socio-economic development and empowerment programmes which would lead to implementation of the objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action. There was also a need for gender-sensitive environment and energy policies and programmes, especially for rural areas and small-scale women's enterprises which required individual energy systems. Her Government, for example, had established a National Commission on the Environment which was formulating environmental policies to address the concerns of women. It had also, in collaboration with the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Population Fund, revitalized and decentralized the national AIDS control programme, involving more community-based non-governmental organizations, including women, youth and other groups, in education and awareness programmes, which had led to better prevention and treatment of the disease. The HIV/AIDS pandemic was a source of great concern and she welcomed the support received from the United Nations and other agencies.

56. United Nations agencies had also provided invaluable support for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action as well as the Convention, in the areas of rehabilitation and capacity-building for governmental and non-governmental machinery. Such partnerships and alliances had created the necessary synergies for the empowerment of women. She reaffirmed her Government's commitment to full implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. To that end, customary and statutory laws with regard to women's rights were being harmonized in order to promote and protect women's rights and ensure them equal opportunities.

57. Recognizing that all forms of violence, especially violence against women, hindered development, she welcomed the efforts of the Mano River Union Women Peace Network to bring about a peaceful resolution of the current conflict involving Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone. The restoration of peaceful coexistence and harmony, which was of particular importance to vulnerable groups, posed special challenges for those countries, which shared common boundaries, cultures, family ties and relationships. It was important that women should play a leading role in conflict resolution and prevention throughout the world. Her Government would continue to involve women in conflict resolution even at the highest level, and she urged the Committee to lobby for increased visibility of women on peace missions and conflict prevention activities.

58. **Mr. Dorji** (Bhutan) recalled that Beijing+5, Copenhagen+5 and the Millennium Summit had reaffirmed the international community's commitment to gender equality, development and peace. While significant progress had been made, however, major obstacles remained in all the critical areas, such as violence against women, feminization of poverty, education, health, human rights and empowerment of women, and globalization had created new challenges and obstacles. National governments, civil society and the international community must redouble their efforts to overcome such obstacles.

59. Violence against women in any form was intolerable and more must be done to address the problem of women's poverty, income inequality and unemployment, especially for rural and poor women. Extreme poverty was one of the root causes of trafficking of women and girls and concerted national and international action was necessary to put an end to that scourge. A gender-sensitive approach to the health of women and girls should be adopted, including increased attention to HIV/AIDS infection among women. The eradication of illiteracy among women was a key to their empowerment, and every effort must be made to improve education and training for women. Women must also play a greater role in decision-making processes and, to that end, national institutions with adequate resources should be established and women's rights should be enshrined in law.

60. His Government had endeavoured to ensure de facto and de jure equality for women. Traditionally, men and women in Bhutan had been equal partners. In terms of family, inheritance, marriage and divorce rights, women enjoyed full equality and he law had been amended where necessary to ensure that there was no discrimination against women. His Government was committed to the well-being of its people and substantial progress had been made towards gender equality. It would continue efforts for the further advancement of women.

61. **Ms. Zoghbia** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that her delegation supported the statement made by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

62. Her country was continuing to make serious and responsible efforts to honour its undertakings with regard to the Beijing Platform for Action. It had become a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1989 and had subsequently brought national legislation into line with the Convention. Women were involved at the highest levels of the decision-making process and had access to the education and training that would enable them to fill positions formerly restricted to men, including in the armed forces and the diplomatic service. A number of further measures had been taken and legislation passed with a view to enabling women to enjoy all their political and civil rights. Her country had also become a party to all the relevant international and regional conventions.

63. Notwithstanding Libya's many achievements with regard to the promotion of women, a number of obstacles continued to prevent the realization of all its goals. Some of those obstacles were a legacy of colonial times, while others resulted from the unilateral economic sanctions imposed by a super-Power for more than two decades, combined with the tyrannical embargo imposed by the Security Council for some 10 years. Both had seriously affected all sectors of society and, in particular, women. Many women had died in childbirth, for example, because access to the necessary medicines and equipment had been denied.

64. She wished to express her country's concern about the level to which poverty, ignorance, disease, war and natural disasters had reduced women in many countries, in Africa in particular. The situation made it imperative for international cooperation to be intensified with a view to implementing the goals of the Platform for Action.

65. If the endeavours related to the promotion of women were to succeed, respect must be shown for the cultural and ideological identities of States, and no State must seek to impose customs or practices that were ill-suited to others. There must also be increased international cooperation.

66. **Mr. Zoumanigui** (Guinea) expressed his delegation's support for the statement made by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

67. The twenty-third special session of the General Assembly had constituted a new point of departure for the advancement of women, and the Millennium Summit had been an occasion for the international community to renew its commitment to women's issues in the United Nations Millennium Declaration. He stressed the key role of the Commission on the Status of Women in promoting women's rights, and of INSTRAW which should be financed from the regular budget rather than having to rely on voluntary contributions.

68. Convinced that the advancement of women was, first and foremost, the responsibility of Governments, the Guinean authorities had established a mechanism for that purpose and taken measures to mainstream gender equality and women's rights into all national programmes. In 1996 the Department of Social Affairs had become the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Advancement of Women and Children. A national

policy had been formulated in 1997, followed by a plan of action for the advancement of women, and 1998 had witnessed the adoption of a gender and development programme whose objectives included economic empowerment; poverty eradication; education, training and literacy; and population activities. All actors, including representatives of the Government, civil society and non-governmental organizations, participated in the programme. In accordance with the conclusions of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, Guinea, with support from bilateral and multilateral partners, had taken numerous initiatives to improve women's socio-economic opportunities, including poverty eradication, literacy programmes, improved education of the girl child and the establishment of health centres.

69. The insecurity and instability caused by armed conflict in the West African subregion and attacks at its border had plagued Guinea for 10 years and had a particularly severe impact on its women and children. Moreover, its meagre resources had to be diverted from development programmes to military and security operations. Peace was a prerequisite for development and the realization of human rights. The international community must assume its share of the responsibility for resolving the situation in West Africa .

70. The Network of African Women, Ministers and Parliamentarians of Guinea had organized a subregional conference in Conakry, from 24 to 26 January 2000, within the framework of conflict prevention and resolution. Through the Network, Guinean women had also participated regularly in meetings of African women's organizations, including the Mano River organization, and of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) with a view to resolving conflicts in the subregion, particularly in Sierra Leone. The international community and the United Nations should support those efforts. In conclusion, his delegation welcomed the Security Council's decision to organize a public debate on 24 October 2000 entitled, "Women and Peace and Security", which it hoped would increase women's involvement in conflict resolution.

71. **Ms. Same** (Cameroon) associated herself with the statement made by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

72. She stressed that the status of women continued to be a source of concern throughout the world. Globalization, which tended to accentuate women's poverty, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic had had a negative impact on women. At the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly the importance of the Beijing Platform for Action had been reaffirmed and new initiatives had been suggested to overcome obstacles and reinforce implementation of the Beijing commitments. Despite progress, however, many people in the world, mostly women, lived on less than 1 dollar a day, and more than 600 million women were illiterate at a time when new technologies offered undeniable opportunities for empowerment. Much therefore needed to be done in the southern hemisphere to ensure the real integration of women into the social development process.

73. The international community must work with States to protect human rights and ensure equality for all. She therefore welcomed the efforts of the United Nations to integrate the gender perspective into its activities and stressed the important role played at the country level by UNIFEM in strengthening the economic and political power of women. She hoped that a regional counsellor for central Africa would soon be appointed and stationed in Cameroon. She also expressed appreciation for the work of the Women's Division, in particular a workshop on the preparation of reports it had organized in Yaoundé from 25 to 29 September 2000, and commended the Secretary-General's proposal to increase the resources of the Division for the Advancement of Women to meet the new demands arising out of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

74. The promotion of women's rights and equality between men and women was a priority for her Government. There was no discrimination in the areas of education or employment. In the health sector, awareness campaigns had been organized to help women protect themselves against AIDS. Since ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Government had taken steps to improve the status of women. Plans were under way to reform family law, and draft provisions on violence against women, in particular genital mutilation, was being prepared. Mechanisms existed at all levels of government to promote women's issues, and non-governmental organizations were working to protect women's rights, eliminate violence and discrimination against women

and promote training for women in the cultural, socio-economic, scientific and technological sectors. With a view to combating women's poverty, many new cooperatives managed by women had facilitated women's access to microcredit, with very positive results. The Government was studying the possibility of creating a credit union system which would be managed at the town and rural community levels. Thanks to the selfless dedication of the rural women, Cameroon had achieved food self-sufficiency.

75. **Ms. Modise** (Botswana) associated herself with the statements made by the Republic of South Africa on behalf of SADC and by Nigeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

76. She stressed the diversity of women's issues and the international community's obligation to seek to resolve any situation which had a negative impact on women. Her delegation took comfort in demonstrations of commitment to women's issues such as the Millennium Summit's pledge to protect human rights and international peace and security, eradicate poverty and promote human development, as well as the Security Council debate on women, peace and security planned for 24 October.

77. There had been a generally positive change in attitude towards women's issues in Botswana, and the Government had prioritized 6 of the 12 critical areas of concern contained in the Beijing Platform: women in poverty, including women's economic empowerment, women in power and decision-making, education and training of women, women and health, violence against women and human rights, and the girl child. In order to meet those priorities, poverty alleviation programmes, some of which were geared towards increasing women's access to credit and training, had been created and the participation of women in decision-making at all levels of public and private life was currently deemed integral to human rights and democracy. As a result of political education, social mobilization and lobbying by non-governmental organizations, there had been many women candidates during the recent elections, women candidates had received more votes than men and the number of women in Parliament had increased from 12.5 per cent in 1994 to 18.2 per cent in 1999. The number of women in senior positions in the public service had also increased significantly.

78. Vocational and tertiary education had been made more accessible and attractive to women, and non-governmental organizations had developed programmes to meet the needs of young mothers by providing them with an opportunity to complete their studies. Family life education had been incorporated into the school curriculum to give girls and boys information on the facts of life and help girls make informed choices about their sexual and reproductive health. Family planning guidelines had been revised to deal with sexually transmitted disease and HIV/AIDS prevention, resulting in a marked reduction in teenage pregnancy.

79. Violence against women was, unfortunately, still a common and under-reported problem which the Government was studying with a view to initiating a multisectoral approach to eradicate it. In the interim, the Penal Code had been amended to strengthen laws on rape, a shelter for battered women had been established, and a police and NGO task force on domestic violence had been formed.

80. Efforts to ensure the advancement of women and protect their rights would continue. The fight against HIV/AIDS, which threatened to reverse progress made by women thus far, had been made a central element in all development programmes. The full involvement of men and women, boys and girls, was necessary for Botswana and other countries to achieve true gender equality, in the spirit of Beijing+5.

81. **Ms. Quarless** (Jamaica) said that her delegation associated itself with the statement made by Guyana on behalf of the Caribbean Community on agenda items 107 and 108.

82. The year 2000 was a milestone in the international community's efforts to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. The commitments made in Beijing had been reaffirmed and expanded in the political declaration and outcome document of the special session on women and constituted the basis for global action to promote gender equality and development.

83. While much had been achieved, women still represented 70 per cent of the world's poor and did not have the same legal, social and economic rights as men in any region of the developing world. Such constraints further exacerbated persistent underdevelopment and hindered economic progress, and it was encouraging that the special session on women had highlighted the problem of the feminization of poverty and the

different effects of globalization, trade liberalization and external debt on men and women.

84. Jamaica had undertaken various initiatives to promote gender mainstreaming and the integration of women into national development. During 1998-1999, special attention had been paid to poverty eradication, violence against women, education and training, and strengthening institutional mechanisms to promote the advancement of women. Efforts had been made to amend various Jamaican laws in order to promote a more gender-sensitive legal environment in harmony with international legislation on women's rights. Extensive research was under way to assess the causes and impact of gender-based violence in Jamaica and the justice system had increased its focus on all aspects of violence against women.

85. Her delegation hoped that the additional protocol to the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, addressing the practice of the trafficking of persons, particularly women and children, would be ready for adoption by the General Assembly in time for the high-level signing conference in December.

86. There was still a need to increase the participation of women in decision-making processes at all levels of the United Nations itself, particularly the higher levels. With regard to INSTRAW, which was the only training institute for the advancement of women in the United Nations system, every effort should be made to avoid its closure.

87. **Mr. Mohammad Kamal** (Malaysia) said that while the various conferences and declarations related to the advancement of women had shown that much progress had been made towards their objectives and commitments, the task of promoting women at the national level was far from complete owing to factors such as the lack of national resources, debt, the decline in international programme funding, and the impact of globalization, particularly in developing countries. In addition, such additional concerns as violence against women, trafficking in women and children, and the effects of HIV/AIDS had arisen and needed to be addressed by the international community.

88. One important area for the advancement of women was the economic sphere and Malaysia provided the secretariat for the Regional Steering Committee on the Economic Advancement of Rural and Island Women for Asia-Pacific. The secretariat's mandate was to assist in the preparation and implementation of specific regional and subregional activities such as training, and research and exchange of information on rural women. Such efforts were in line with the national policy to include all Malaysian women in the development of the country.

89. Violence against women was another area of concern; it occurred not only in the family or community, but was also perpetrated by the State. Malaysia specifically condemned the use of rape, since it was an act of aggression where the perpetrators derived satisfaction from humiliating their victims. Rape during times of conflict should be considered a war crime, as in the case of the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Kosovo, where massive rape was an evident policy of war. At the national level, Malaysia had enacted the Domestic Violence Act 1994 to protect women against domestic abuse.

90. It was hoped that the close partnership between the Government and non-governmental organizations in the implementation of gender-sensitive programmes would further enhance and facilitate mainstreaming women in the economy and society.

91. Malaysia was concerned about the trafficking of girls and women and would give its full cooperation to preventing such activities. It viewed the politicizing of culture and religion with great concern and did not consider that Islam was an obstacle to the advancement of women, since the true teachings and practices of Islam did not discriminate against women.

92. **Mr. Naber** (Jordan) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement of the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the G-77 and that effective international cooperation could contribute towards fulfilling the goals of gender equality and the advancement of women.

93. During the special session on women, one area of progress had been identifying specific forms of violence against women and addressing them through policy, legal and institutional reforms designed to prevent such abuses.

94. It had become fashionable to decry certain countries and regions for crimes committed against women in the name of honour. The nature of contemporary broadcasting meant that dramatized personal stories were more effective than statistics and reasoning to reach enormous audiences instantaneously; the trend was to make people feel

without giving them time to think. In fact, labelling crimes committed in the name of honour as "traditional or customary practice" misrepresented the facts and demonstrated ignorance of Islamic Law, Bedouin Tribal Law and local customs. Therefore, a dialogue was necessary to clarify the issue.

95. In some reports, crimes committed in the name of honour had been justified by Islamic or tribal law when, in fact, if there was social pressure to commit such crimes, it was based on ignorance of the law and on the legal loophole that had facilitated such crimes in Jordan: article 340 of the Penal Code. The article appeared to contravene Islamic Law, traditional Bedouin Law and local custom, and the Government was seeking to annul it so as to eliminate the excuse used by the perpetrators of such crimes. The Jordanian religious establishment had waged its own campaign to explain the position of Islam on women's issues.

96. The campaign to abrogate article 340 was the culmination of a long national effort against crimes committed against women in the name of honour using educational, social policy and media channels. Its abrogation could not be expected to completely eliminate such crimes immediately; however, they had already become much rarer. Furthermore, it should be noted that recent statistics on crimes committed against women in the name of honour included incidents that should be classified as crimes of passion or religious crimes, neither of which were committed by the nomadic or Bedouin tribes but rather by the settled tribes. Moreover, such crimes were hardly confined to developing nations and occurred whenever a man regarded a woman as his property and sought to uphold that false assumption by cruel and abusive force.

97. **Mr. Al-Mohanndi** (Qatar) said that his country believed education to be one of the most important elements in enabling women to assume their rightful place in society. The Government had also made it a priority to ensure that women enjoyed equality with men in society, the economy, education and health. A permanent constitution was currently being prepared that would grant women full political rights, in recognition of their positive role in society.

98. The establishment of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs demonstrated the State's commitment to providing the necessary mechanisms for the promotion of women and the family. The Council had reviewed and made recommendations regarding legislation relevant to the family. It had also made a significant contribution to the development of various family-related programmes. While it was recognized that much remained to be done, every effort was genuinely being exerted to improve the situation of women, who, as half of society, had a vital role to play.

99. In any discussion of the promotion of women, the women in the occupied Arab territories, both in Palestine and the occupied Syrian Golan, must be mentioned. The fact that they and their economic resources were subject to Israeli control made it imperative that the international community should assume its responsibilities, end that abominable occupation and alleviate the suffering endured by the Palestinian refugees. Qatar had itself pledged $800,000 to the proposed Canada camp in Lebanon.

100. **Mr. Husain** (Permanent Observer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)) said the advancement of women was an important issue because it concerned well over half the world's population and had implications for the family, the pivotal unit of society. Actions to promote the advancement of women should have a significant and lasting effect, and efforts to promote education and social justice, deliver health-care services and empower women through economic development initiatives which promoted the creation and strengthening of a skilled workforce would contribute not only to the empowerment of women but also to the healthy transformation of the very fabric of society. He therefore called for full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as well as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, in accordance with the core moral values, constitutions and legislation of OIC member States. In that context, he supported the need to mainstream the gender perspective into programmes and policies as emphasized in the report of the Secretary-General on follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women (A/55/293).

101. The eighth OIC Summit, held in Tehran in December 1997, had declared that equality for all human beings could only be achieved through the full participation of women, and, to that end, had called on OIC member States to organize women's activities at the national and international levels in a manner consistent with the enormous opportunities available within Islamic law. OIC and its specialized and affiliated institutions were endeavouring to implement that mandate through their technical cooperation

programmes, including those undertaken jointly with the United Nations family in support of the development efforts of OIC member States.

102. He noted that the report of the Secretary-General on the status of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/55/308) described technical assistance provided to States parties, and in particular to Cameroon, a member State of OIC, to support implementation of the Convention (para. 21). He suggested that Cameroon's experience could be taken as a model for inclusion of such capacity-building activity in cooperation programmes with the United Nations family aimed at the economic and social development of OIC member States.

103. OIC was committed to promoting the full participation of women at all levels of society, and programmes for that purpose would be developed and strengthened as experience provided new opportunities to meet member States' needs and set goals for the advancement of women. In that same spirit, OIC would continue to cooperate fully with United Nations efforts to improve the political and socio-economic status of women.

104. **Ms. King** (Assistant Secretary-General, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women), speaking on behalf of the United Nations bodies and agencies related to women's issues, thanked the Committee for its recognition of the work of the Secretariat, in particular, the quality of the reports, the support for Beijing+5 and for the wide variety of operational and technical assistance activities related to the advancement of women.

105. Beijing+5 was a milestone on the road which had started in Mexico City in 1975. Delegations' statements showed that the outcome document, resulting from a close collaboration between all the participants, had provided the international community with not only a blueprint for basic and far-reaching actions but also an updated set of initiatives. Those statements highlighted the importance of decisions on globalization, the impact of deep poverty on women, violence, trafficking, HIV/AIDS, women's participation in decision-making and peace negotiations. The gender gap in the area of communication technology and the need to look at indigenous and rural women had also been mentioned. Many of the delegations had described the actions taken by their countries since June and the stress on gender analysis, mainstreaming and budgeting in all policies and programmes was very heartening. She hoped that the action on the draft resolutions would reflect the goals of gender equality, development and peace.

106. The forthcoming discussion of the Security Council on October 24, with a view to bringing women fully into all peace activities and post-conflict efforts in line with the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/305-S/2000/809) and the Windhoek Declaration, showed a growing awareness of the need for gender mainstreaming in forums other than those dealing with social development issues.

107. The delegations had provided guidance and proposals, particularly on how to focus on implementation of the various goals set out in the outcome document and also on the importance of strengthening the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Optional Protocol, UNIFEM and INSTRAW. In the case of INSTRAW, she hoped that the support would result in financial commitments.

108. She looked forward to working with the Committee to fully implement the Beijing Platform for Action, the Political Declaration and the outcome document so that gender equality goals would be fully achieved.

The meeting rose at 6.50 p.m.